

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-05
CEA-01 AGRE-00 DHA-05 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03
PA-01 PRS-01 OES-07 /102 W
-----101491 230757Z /13

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7013
INFO AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 1022

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PINT PDIP ECON UR SE IO MP
SUBJECT: MAURITIAN WEEKLY REVIEW - SEPTEMBER 23

REF: PORT LOUIS 1005

SUMMARY: PORT LOUIS 1021 PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THIS
CABLE. END SUMMARY

1. THE NEWSPAPER WEEKEND GAVE CURRENCY IN ITS SEPTEMBER 18 EDITION TO A NUMBER OF RUMORS WHICH HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING IN THE POLITICAL WORLD: (A) THAT BY-ELECTIONS WILL BE LEGALIZED ONCE AGAIN TO REPLACE THE PRESENT SYSTEM WHICH PERMITS THE APPOINTMENT OF A PERSON FROM THE SAME PARTY TO FILL THE VACANCY OF A RETIRING DEPUTY; (B) THAT MAURITIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PMSD) LEADER DUVAL WILL THEN RUN TO FILL THE VACANCY LEFT BY HIS SISTER IN THE CUREPIPE DISTRICT WHO PLANS TO RESIGN TO LET HER BROTHER RE-ENTER THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY; (C) DUVAL WILL THEN BE NAMED FOREIGN MINISTER TO REPLACE SIR HAROLD WALTER WHO (D) WILL BE NAMED TO BE THE MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE OAU OR TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK. THE PAPER POINTED OUT THAT WITH THE DEFECTIONS
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OF THE TWO MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) DEPUTIES (MOORBA TO THE LABOR RANKS AND RAMPHUL TO AN "INDEPENDENT" STATUS), THE GOVERNMENT COALITION FEELS ITSELF IN A MORE SECURE POSITION TO REINSTITUTE THE BI-ELECTION SYSTEM.

2. RESPONDING TO HIS EXPULSION FROM THE MMM, DEPUTY HARRIS RAMPHUL GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE REPEATED

BITTER ATTACKS AGAINST THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MMM, SAID HE WOULD SIT AS AN INDEPENDENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, BELIEVED A LABOR/PMSD/MMM COALITION WOULD BE FORMED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND MAINTAINED THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE MMM'S ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES ARE MUSLIM, ERGO THEY ARE RUNNING THE PARTY AND DISCRIMINATING AGAINST THE HINDUS. RAMPHUL CONCLUDED THAT SHOULD THE MMM EVER TAKE POWER, MAURITIUS WOULD BECOME A DICTATORSHIP.

3. RAMESH BALGOBIN, SECRETARY OF THE LABOR PARTY'S AGENTS ASSOCIATION, MADE HEADLINES THIS WEEK BY CHALLENGING THE MMM'S SECRETARY GENERAL, PAUL BERENGER, TO A PUBLIC DEBATE. BALGOBIN WANTS TO TAKE BERENGER TO TASK ON THE QUESTIONS OF NATIONALIZATION OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND ON SEVERAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. BY WEEK'S END, BERENGER HAD NOT ANSWERED BALGOBIN'S INVITATION, AND IT APPEARED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO IGNORE THE CHALLENGE.

4. THE NEWSPAPER, NATION, OWNED PRIMARILY BY EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE MINISTERS JAGATSINGH AND BOOLELL, AGREED TO PAY ANEEROOD JUGNAUTH, PRESIDENT OF THE MMM, 3,000 RUPEES IN DAMAGES FOR PRINTING AN ARTICLE IN SEPTEMBER 1976 WHICH "DEFAMED" THE MMM LEADER. AFTER THE JUDGMENT AGAINST NATION WAS HANDED DOWN BY THE COURT, JUGNAUTH REDUCED HIS ORIGINAL CLAIM OF 9,999 RUPEES BY LESS THAN ONE-THIRD. THE PAPER ALSO PRINTED AN APOLOGY ON ITS FRONT CONFIDENTIAL

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5. MMM LEADERS BERENGER AND JUGNAUTH FLEW TO THE SEYCHELLES SEPTEMBER 16-19 FOR TALKS WITH PRESIDENT RENE ON INDIAN OCEAN SECURITY MATTERS. BILLED AS PART OF A REGIONAL EFFORT BY THE "PROGRESSIVE FORCES" OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS TO ORGANIZE A CONFERENCE AGAINST FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE, THE TRIP WAS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF VISITS. ACCORDING TO LE MILITANT, THE LEADERS MET WITH THE SEYCHELLES PRESIDENT TO DISCUSS THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE REGION, AND "IN PARTICULAR THE MILITARIZATION OF DIEGO GARCIA." SOVIET FISHING AROUND THE SAYA DE MALHA BANKS WAS ALSO TOUCHED UPON (REFTEL), AS WELL AS THE NEED TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE UPON THE SOUTH AFRICAN TOURIST TRADE IN BOTH THE SEYCHELLES AND MAURITIUS. UPON HIS RETURN FROM THE SEYCHELLES BERENGER ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD SOON TRAVEL TO MADAGASCAR AND THE COMOROS TO CONTINUE THE TALKS.

6. MINISTER OF SOCIAL SECURITY BADRY LEFT FOR MOSCOW ON SEPTEMBER 22 TO ATTEND A "WORLD FRIENDSHIP" CONFERENCE. THE PRESS REPORTED THAT BADRY WAS CHARGED ALSO WITH MAKING THE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM'S

OFFICIAL VISITY TO THE USSR NEXT NOVEMBER FOR THE
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION.

7. THE CONSUMERS' PRICE INDEX (CPI) REGISTERED AN INCREASE
OF 0.9 DURING AUGUST, REACHING THE OVERALL LEVEL OF 113.6.
FROZEN FISH, WHICH EXPERIENCED THE HIGHEST JUMP, WAS SAID
TO HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CIP'S INCREASE.
BROWN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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